

H. R. 863.

[Report No 261.]

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

MARCH 3, 1857.

Read twice, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow

Mr. FLAGLER, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, reported the following bill :

A BILL

Providing for a contract for the transportation of the United States mails between New York and Savannah, and Pará, or Maranham, in the Empire of Brazil.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives*
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That the Postmaster General be, and he is hereby, authorized
4 and directed, on behalf of the government of the United States,
5 to enter into a contract with Robert M. Stratton, Samuel L.
6 Mitchill, William H. Webb, and Thomas Rainey, of New
7 York, for the transportation of the mails of the United States,
8 once each way in each and every month, for the space of eight
9 years, between the cities of New York and Savannah, in the
10 United States, and Pará, or Maranham, in the Empire of Bra-

11 zil, *via* the islands of St. Thomas and Barbadoes, (or such other
12 convenient point as may be agreed upon between the contrac-
13 tors and the Postmaster General,) and English Guiana; said
14 service to commence within three months from the passage of
15 this act, and the compensation for the same to be seventeen
16 thousand dollars per month, or for each round voyage, to be paid
17 monthly from any moneys in the treasury not otherwise
18 appropriated; the said contractors giving adequate security for
19 the performance of the contract: *Provided*, That the said
20 Stratton, Mitchill, Webb, and Rainey shall provide steamships
21 for the said mail service of the first class in their construction
22 and passenger accommodations, of at least twelve hundred tons
23 burden, government measure, with side lever or oscillating
24 engines, adapting them to purposes of war, and with suit-
25 able mail rooms for the safe-keeping of mail matter; said steam-
26 ships to pass the inspection of the properly authorized in-
27 spectors of the government of the United States; to be of
28 American build, and to be commanded by citizens of the
29 United States: *Provided, secondly*, That the government shall
30 have the power to increase the same to a semi-monthly, or
31 weekly service, at the same price, pro rata, by giving eight
32 months' notice to said contractors: *Provided, thirdly, further*,
33 That the government shall have the right to demand of, and
34 appropriate to its own use, at any time, any or all of the
35 steamships used in said service, at a price to be fixed by the

36 Secretary of the Navy and the said Stratton, Mitchill, Webb,
 37 and Rainey; and in case of disagreement, the same to be deter-
 38 mined by valuation : *Provided, fourthly, further,* That if at any
 39 time hereafter the governments of the United States and of
 40 Great Britain shall agree to withhold from the owners of all
 41 steamships employed in transporting the mails on the Atlantic
 42 and Pacific oceans all compensation whatsoever, then, in that
 43 case, this contract shall be null and void.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That the said steamers
 2 shall, at each and every passage to or from the United States,
 3 touch at, or off, the port of Savannah, in the State of Georgia,
 4 for the receipt and delivery of the mails of the United States ;
 5 and for each and every violation of this section, a fine of two.
 6 thousand dollars shall be imposed, and the amount shall be de-
 7 ducted from the compensation allowed under this act.

1 SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That the steamers
 2 employed in the transportation of said mails shall carry, free
 3 . of all expenses to the government, mail agents, or bearers of
 4 United States government despatches, between the United
 5 States and South America.